

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 778

By Faulk

A RESOLUTION to urge improved public awareness of the Safe Haven program and its participating community facilities.

WHEREAS, since being enacted on July 1, 2001, Tennessee's Safe Haven Law has helped save at least thirty-nine newborns over the past ten years; and

WHEREAS, the law allows mothers to anonymously surrender their unharmed babies to designated Safe Haven facilities within seventy-two hours of birth without fear of being prosecuted; the mother must surrender the baby herself and leave the newborn with a staff member at the designated facility; and

WHEREAS, a mother surrendering her newborn may be asked questions regarding identity and medical history but she is NOT required to answer; and

WHEREAS, the many designated Safe Haven facilities include hospitals, birthing centers, community health clinics (health departments), outpatient and walk-in clinics, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) facilities, and 24-hour staffed police and fire stations across Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, newborn abandonment is a phenomenon that has no socio-economic boundaries, which although it does not occur every day in Tennessee, is a problem that can be prevented with awareness and education; and

WHEREAS, April is Safe Haven Awareness Month in Tennessee, a time dedicated to recognizing the importance of raising awareness of Safe Haven Laws and preventing newborn abandonment; and

WHEREAS, in light of another tragic loss of a newborn recently in Mt. Carmel, Tennessee, Safe Haven Awareness Month is also a time to remember the babies who were unsafely abandoned, many of whom do not survive; and



WHEREAS, with increased public awareness of the Safe Haven Law and designated Safe Haven facilities, lives may be saved with this information that could prevent a young woman from making a devastating decision for herself and her baby; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that in a continuing effort to save the lives of newborns in Tennessee, that we hereby call on and urge the media and all community facilities designated as Safe Havens to improve community awareness of the Safe Haven program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we also urge every citizen of Tennessee to become familiar with the Safe Haven Law during Safe Haven Awareness Month.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.